

As a free market capitalist, I am very concerned about, and strongly oppose, further relaxing the rules on media ownership. Our economic system depends on the free functioning of markets. As any economist can tell you, the current concentration of media ownership gives oligopolistic power to major media corporations, diminishing quality of content, skewing markets for advertising, and limiting the public's access to a variety of sources of information. Illustrative of this last point is the major media's near blackout of coverage of this very issue, concentration of media ownership. You will recall that one claimed justification for giving away the public airways and relaxing media ownership rules by way of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was that the public interest would continue to be sufficiently protected. This has proven not to be the case, as noted.

The last decade has already seen an enormous concentration of media ownership. One important result has been the censorship of content, such as Clear Channel's decision not to play music of any artist that has expressed views opposing the war, or the major networks' failure to cover your own processes with respect to concentration of media ownership. Please take your responsibility to the public seriously and reject further concentration of media ownership. Yours may someday be the minority views that need protecting.